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Biomass groundbreaking event set for July 27

Summary: The public is invited to attend a groundbreaking ceremony for the new biomass facility at UMM. The brief ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. on Friday, July 27, at the construction site located next to the campus' Heating Plant.

(June 8, 2007)-The public is invited to attend a groundbreaking ceremony for the new biomass facility to be constructed at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The brief ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. on Friday, July 27, at the construction site located next to the campus' Heating Plant.

The University of Minnesota Board of Regents gave final approval during its June meeting for construction of a biomass gasification reactor and facility at UMM. The reactor will convert corn stalks and other residual materials into a syngas – similar to natural gas - that can be burned to produce clean energy to generate heat (and cooling in the near future) for the campus. The facility will serve as a platform for UMM's research partners to identify trade-offs and opportunities surrounding gasifying other agricultural residues.

“The biomass plant conceptual goals were to rethink how we use energy and explore the possibilities of using renewable agricultural based feed stocks in a sustainable manner,” said Lowell Rasmussen, UMM associate vice chancellor for physical plant and master planning. “UMM approached the (University of Minnesota) West Central Research and Outreach Center (in Morris) to help in developing this plan.”

The project received one of 12 USDA/DOE (United States Departments of Agriculture and Energy) energy grants for \$1.89 million to conduct additional research using this project. This grant, the largest received by the Morris campus to date, allowed UMM/WCROC to add the USDA Agricultural Research Service – North Central Soil Conservation Research Lab into the partnership to conduct research on carbon sequestration. The total project cost is \$8,956,000, which includes grant money.

Construction on the facility is scheduled for completion in spring 2008. A formal celebration is being planned for this fall.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.